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# THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING

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## EDITORIAL COMMENT



### THE AMERICAN HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION AND NURSING EDUCATION

PROGRESS in nursing education has been in a measure, at a standstill for some little time because of indecision on two important points,—the first being whether or not hospitals are to be equipped to fill the place of educational institutions for the training of nurses; the second being the length of time of training, whether two years or three.

Broadly speaking, whatever progress has been made in nursing education the world over has been accomplished only with the consent and coöperation of the boards of managers of hospitals maintaining training schools. At the meeting of the American Hospital Association held in Toronto, September 29–October 2, 1908, one session was devoted to papers and discussions on the various phases of nursing education. It will be remembered that the membership of this association was broadened last year to include hospital managers, and that a large proportion of the members are nurses holding the double position of superintendent of the hospital and training school. In his address as president, Dr. Goldwater recommended that the eligibility be still further broadened to include superintendents and assistant superintendents of training schools, and that the scope of the association be made to include every phase of caring for the sick in hospitals.

Papers were read by Miss C. A. Aikens of Detroit on "The Relation of the Training School to Hospital Efficiency"; by the Reverend A. S. Kavanagh, D.D., of the Methodist Episcopal Hospital, Brooklyn, on "Report of the Subcommittee on the Training of Nurses"; and, by invitation, by Anna L. Alline, R.N., inspector of nurse training schools of New York State, on "Inspection of Nurse Training Schools, Its Aims and Results"; and by Adelaide Nutting, R.N., director of the Hospital Economics Course, Teachers' College, New York, on "Some

Problems of the Training School." These papers have been published in the *National Hospital Record*, the official organ of the association, in the October and November issues.

Dr. Kavanagh, in closing his paper, offered a resolution which, after some amendments, was adopted in the following form:

RESOLVED: That a committee be appointed, consisting of seven members of this organization, whose duty it shall be:

*First.*—To seek information from leading physicians, surgeons, nurses and training-school committees, and from every available source, bearing upon the curriculum and length of the course of training of our nurses;

*Second.*—To consider to what extent hospitals should undertake to prepare a class of nurse helpers or assistants;

*Third.*—To present a model curriculum, containing only such subjects as they deem necessary for the proper training of a regular nurse or a nurse helper, and to report at the next annual meeting of this association.

RESOLVED FURTHERMORE: That the treasurer be authorized to pay the expenses of said committee.

The following persons have accepted appointments on this committee: Henry M. Hurd, M.D., Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore; W. L. Babcock, M.D., Grace Hospital, Detroit; F. A. Washburn, M.D., Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston; Mary M. Riddle, Newton Hospital, Newton Lower Falls; Mary L. Keith, Rochester City Hospital, Rochester; Charlotte M. Aikens, Detroit; and John M. Peters, M.D., Rhode Island Hospital, Providence, ex-officio.

We believe that through the findings of this committee will be reached definite conclusions which will lead to a harmonious agreement of the mooted questions referred to above. Such a searching inquiry into nursing conditions by an association composed of men and women, hospital managers and superintendents, nurses and doctors, must lead ultimately to good results. One meeting has been held, in New York, on December 15.

We would call the attention of the great body of private duty nurses to that clause in these resolutions which refers to the preparation of a class of nurse helpers or assistants. This proposition is not new, it has been discussed in many cities, by different groups of physicians. It is now under consideration by a medical association of St. Paul, which is looking for a hospital in which to train such helpers, the object being to provide cheaper nurses for the great middle class.

The subject of providing skilled nursing for the vast multitude of

people who cannot afford to pay the regular charges has been discussed by our national, state, and local associations without coming to any satisfactory solution of the problem. We believe that unless some practical conclusion can be reached by the nursing body to provide such service by regular graduates, we shall have to accept a cheaper grade of nurse, who will be endorsed by hospitals and physicians, which will lower the standard of care given such patients, and prove a very serious commercial competitor in the field of nursing.

We recommend to the state associations that they take up the question of the sliding scale seriously and ask for a conference with their state medical association, a committee being appointed from each association to meet and draw up a plan to be submitted for adoption to the two associations. It goes without saying that the sliding scale cannot be put into operation by the individual nurse without the support of the medical profession as a whole, but we believe the medical profession will see the wisdom and justice of such a plan when it is placed before them by the state nurses' associations.

#### REFERENCE LIBRARIES FOR GRADUATE NURSES

THE letter from T. B. H. found on another page, suggests a condition which we had not realized existed in what we might consider our good training schools. The plan suggested is an excellent one, and we recommend to *alumnæ* associations, that are without special aims for work, that they take up this matter with the managers of their hospitals, and establish small libraries to which both graduates and pupils shall have access.

In a broader way we think it is a timely subject for the state associations—to consider the establishment of travelling libraries to be loaned in turn to the different local associations for a certain number of weeks or months at a time. These books could be obtained to a considerable extent by donations from members who have copies of text and reference books which they would be glad to dispose of in this way. A small appropriation each year from the society funds would keep such libraries stocked and up to date. When these libraries are received by the local associations, the books would be loaned to the individual members in turn.

A letter from another correspondent includes a suggestion which bears upon this same subject. The writer asks for suggestions for a course of study for an *alumnæ* association and speaks of the interest in the examination questions which are published from the different states. She gives as a reason for not taking up these subjects the difficulty of having access to the books that would be required.

This brings to our mind the suggestion that it would be very interesting if an alumnae association would take up in connection with the social or other subjects on its program, some one subject covered by the examinations for the season. For instance, bacteriology could be chosen, taking that subject in its relation to the home, to public health, surgery, obstetrics, etc. By combining questions on this subject from the different states, topics would be suggested which could be distributed among the members to study up, and submit brief abstracts or papers. In succeeding years, as the need seemed to be most pressing, other subjects could be taken in turn. In connection with such study the travelling library would be invaluable.

When we consider how few really good nursing books there are, we think one started with even a dozen volumes would be very valuable. As a nucleus to choose from, we would suggest the following: "History of Nursing," Nutting and Dock; the books on general nursing by Robb, McIsaac, Maxwell and Pope; "Nursing Ethics," Robb; "Hygiene for Nurses," McIsaac; "Essentials of Dietetics," Pope and Carpenter; "Bacteria, Yeasts and Molds," Conn; "Obstetrics for Nurses," DeLee; "Consumption and Civilization," Huber; "Anatomy and Physiology," Kimber; "Dietetics," Friedenwald and Ruhräh; "Personal Hygiene," Pyle; Cooke's "Obstetrics;" the lives of Dorothea Dix and Florence Nightingale; "Confessio Medici;" "Consumption, How to Prevent It and How to Live with It," N. S. Davis; "Chasing the Cure in Colorado," Galbreath; "Nursing the Insane," Barrus; Thompson's "Dietetics;" "Food and Its Functions," Knight; "Fundamentals of Child Study," Kirkpatrick; "Nursing the Nervous and Insane," Mills; "Prophylaxis of Syphilis," Maisouneuve.

#### APHTHOUS FEVER

THE epidemic of aphthous fever, or foot and mouth disease, which is prevalent in the stock-yards and on the farms in a number of counties of western New York and Pennsylvania, is a matter for very grave anxiety. This disease is very highly infectious, affecting all cloven-footed animals, and may be transmitted to horses, dogs, cats, poultry, birds and man; children being most frequently infected from the use of raw milk of diseased cows. It may be carried in hay, straw, grain, manure, bags, blankets, etc., from places where diseased animals have been. It is necessary to guard against the spread of infection by dogs, cats, and birds, such as pigeons and sparrows.

The virus is most difficult to destroy, having been found in manure piles six months after an outbreak of the disease. The infection is taken through the digestive or respiratory tract or through the skin or

blood. The period of incubation is from one to five days, symptoms being hot dry mouth, slow careful chewing, grinding of the teeth, an excess secretion of mucus or saliva, the animal works the tongue and makes a clicking or smacking sound, there is froth about the lips. In attempting to eat any hard substance, the head is held high to avoid sore places in the throat. The second stage is one of eruption; the third, erosion; and the fourth, sloughing. The after-affect is debilitation, making such animals unprofitable; the breeding of stock has to be stopped.

Wherever this disease has appeared, a rigid quarantine has been enforced, which includes not only the animals but the men who have been employed in their care. Whole herds of cows, upon which farmers are dependent for their maintenance, are being destroyed, but some compensation is given by both the federal and state governments.

#### A NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR TEACHERS OF NURSES

THE Commission of Lunacy of the State of New York has, after very careful consideration, decided on the appointment of an additional number of superintendents of nurses for the training schools in the insane hospitals. The announcement is made on another page of the State Civil Service examination for such positions, which will be held in the latter part of January. There are three appointments to be filled, with salaries of twelve hundred dollars each. For particulars as to time, place, etc., application should be made to the Chief Examiner of the State Civil Service, Albany, N. Y.

It is to be hoped that a splendid group of women will take this examination, for there is no branch of nursing in which the highest type of woman with the best professional attainments is more greatly needed. The bringing into the teaching force women with general hospital knowledge is a great step forward in the training of nurses for the care of the insane.

#### PROGRESS OF STATE REGISTRATION

THE Michigan nurses are again preparing to enter the legislative field and have prepared an excellent bill, the passage of which they hope this year to be able to secure. Although previously defeated, they have not lost courage nor their high standard.

In South Carolina, the state association is discussing registration. A bill was drawn up a year ago but was not carried forward because of the opposition of great numbers of small hospitals. In that state the great majority of the hospitals are of fifteen beds or less; they are really chartered infirmaries, where training is done by the physicians who are the proprietors, and the nurses leading the movement are confronted

with the problem of recognizing this class of institution or of postponing the effort to secure a proper bill.

The general agitation of the subject over the country will eventually, we believe, better such conditions, and while the situation is most disheartening, we believe time and patience will, in the end, bring success. Such states will recognize the necessity for registration when they are so without means of protection that all of the riffraff from the registered states flock over their borders in order to find occupation.

The new state of Oklahoma is preparing a bill which we shall comment on in a later number.

The Massachusetts nurses are strengthening their forces.

#### DISPOSITION OF FUNDS

MISS NUTTING, chairman of the nurses' committee for the International Congress on Tuberculosis, is sending out a request for information as to what shall be done with the funds on hand, about five hundred and fifty dollars, contributed for the nurses' exhibit, which it was found impossible to carry out. Those who contributed to the fund are asked to say whether they wish the money returned or applied to some nursing matter of general interest. Miss Nutting may be addressed at Teachers' College, New York. We venture to suggest as two good uses for this fund the endowment fund of Teachers' College or the JOURNAL fund of the Associated Alumnae, or both.

#### NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

AMONG the good resolutions which our readers are making for the new year, we hope there is to be a little place in a warm corner of their hearts, for one for the welfare of the JOURNAL. We want to remind our stockholders, our subscribers, and our readers who are not subscribers, that the future welfare of their magazine depends upon the interest and support which each one takes in it. We want to make again our appeal of some years ago, that each subscriber shall secure at least one new name for the subscription list.

We want to remind those organizations holding stock, that in becoming members of the JOURNAL COMPANY they have assumed an obligation for its professional and financial success. The few people who are paid to carry on the work of the JOURNAL cannot, unaided by their professional associates, make of the JOURNAL an interesting magazine and a paying business enterprise. There has never been a year when the JOURNAL has seemed to give greater satisfaction to the masses than the one that has just closed. It becomes with each issue a more influential and far-reaching educational factor, and if its pages

are to be increased and its subject matter made more interesting, there must be not only a continued, but an increasing, support from all of those forces which have led to its establishment and development. We have a word to say especially to those nurses who read the *JOURNAL* but who do not subscribe for it. We wish it to be read, and we give it freely and thankfully to those who are unable for any reason to subscribe for it, and we know there are many on that list. But we know also that there are great numbers of prosperous nurses who borrow the *JOURNAL* from their friends, or who glance it over hastily at a club, who should feel themselves under obligation to bear their share of the financial support of the magazine which their profession is publishing for their benefit.

Changing addresses need not be an unsurmountable obstacle, for the business office is only too happy to make the changes as often as asked, care being taken in each instance to give old and new address both, that there be no chance for mistake.

The Hartford Hospital *alumnæ* have established a precedent which we commend to others. In a series of monthly meetings decided upon, one subject for early consideration was "The Advantage Derived from the *AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING* by the Nurse in Private Work," and a committee was appointed to arouse interest in the *JOURNAL* and obtain subscriptions for it. We think every association affiliated with the Associated *Alumnæ* should devote at least one meeting a year to this subject. The Associated *Alumnæ* is slowly but surely acquiring the *JOURNAL* stock, and in a very few years the burden of its financial support will rest upon that organization, and not upon the few individual stockholders and *alumnæ* associations that now stand back of it. The habit of supporting the official organ of the national society should be formed before the entire obligation is assumed.